

Remarks Prepared for Richard E. Greene
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I am pleased to report that at EPA, I discovered an organization full of employees dedicated to achieving our common goal of protecting public health and the environment. It is a great experience, and I am proud to be part of this important effort. It is evident from the topics included in your conference agenda that we are working to find solutions to many of the same environmental challenges, particularly those involving clean air and pure water.

At EPA, our goal is clear and simple: to make America's air cleaner, its water purer, and its land better protected. I am pleased to report that Arkansas has continued to demonstrate its leadership in helping us achieve our goals. Together we have faced many challenges, and we have made real progress towards achieving this aim.

Today, I'd like to share with you some of our accomplishments, as well as some of the work we still need to do. First, cleaner air. Since the creation of the EPA more than thirty years ago, our air has become significantly cleaner. Legislation, such as the Clean Air Act, has gone a long way in reversing the environmental damage that decades of unchecked pollution had inflicted on our environment. Despite this progress, there is still more that needs to be done. Children suffer from asthma at alarmingly high rates, many of our national parks, like Big Bend and the Grand Canyon, are shrouded in a murky haze, and our environment continues to endure damage from poor air quality.

However, as we work to address this situation, more often than not, we are finding that the tools which served us well in the past are attracting a great amount of litigation, making them inefficient. The Clean Air Act is an example of the command and control model which has long dominated federal environmental policy, and one that is a model that this Administration believes is no longer the only way to achieve environmental progress.

While the Clean Air Act has made a difference, it's important to note that the most successful program in over a decade to address air quality has been the Acid Rain

such as the Acid Rain program are proving what this Administration believes, that we can move beyond command and control and embrace new and innovative approaches.

This is why President Bush has introduced the landmark Clear Skies Act of 2003. This legislation will achieve mandatory reductions of 70 percent of three of the most dangerous pollutants emitted by power plants nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and mercury. Clear Skies moves us away from simple command and control, toward using the power of the market to achieve results. Rather than setting individual targets on particular smokestacks, it sets mandatory reductions on the industry as a whole and gives facilities flexibility in determining how to meet those reductions.

Clear Skies will set a clear, objective standard for mandatory reductions, and, although it sets the goal, Clear Skies does not regulate the path to meeting that goal. This flexibility enables states and facilities to pursue the most cost effective approach to cleaner air and helps ensure our ability as a nation to respond quickly and efficiently to changes in the energy marketplace.

By using this market-based approach, we will remove 35 million more tons of NO_x, SO₂, and mercury from the air over the first ten years of the Clear Skies Act than the current Clean Air Act would achieve in that same time frame. Clear Skies will also provide dramatic health benefits to the American people every year, including preventing 12,000 premature deaths and reducing by 15 million the days when sufferers of asthma and other respiratory illnesses are unable to work, go to school, or carry out their normal day to day activities because of bad air quality.

Signing Clear Skies into law is one of the President's top domestic goals for the year, because Clear Skies is a clear win for the American people. It will clean up our air, increase energy security, improve public health, and protect our lakes, rivers, and streams.

Many of you will recall that we launched the President's Clear Skies proposal at a press conference in Little Rock last year. Today, Clear Skies legislation has been proposed in Congress, and the debate is on-going. Just this week, the Arkansas Democrat carried a guest article by Randy Thurman, executive director of the Arkansas Environmental Federation in Little Rock, highlighting the benefits of the President's "clear skies" legislation for Arkansas.

He stated, "Here's how Arkansas will benefit from the Clear Skies by 2020. Deposition of sulfur and nitrogen would be reduced by 15 to 30 percent, and visibility

to take early action to assure cleaner air. Their commitment to take proactive steps to prevent pollution helps to ensure that the air quality of Little Rock continues to meet the federal standards. It is a great accomplishment, and one of only five such agreements in the Nation.

Water is another area of major concern for us. In fact, I believe strongly that water quality and quantity issues will likely pose the greatest environmental challenge of the 21st century. And, there are no communities more knowledgeable of this challenge than those here in Arkansas.

Since passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, we have solved many of the problems resulting from the direct discharge of pollutants into America's waterways, through improved sewage treatment and industrial wastewater management. As a result, many of America's waters are once again safe for drinking, swimming, and fishing. However, the challenges we face in 2003 are not as clearly defined as those we faced 30 years ago. It was pretty obvious back then that the direct dumping of waste into our rivers had to stop, but today the major contributor to water pollution nationwide is much more difficult to address, nonpoint source pollution.

Polluted runoff, or nonpoint source pollution can come from many diffuse places. As runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and man-made pollutants, depositing them in area rivers, lakes and drinking water sources. The runoff from city streets and rural farms, from parking lots and suburban lawns, are all nonpoint sources of water pollution. Countless small acts, such as changing your oil in your driveway without proper disposal of the used oil, or over-fertilizing your yards can add up to big problems. Under the Clean Water Act's 319(h) grant program, EPA has awarded \$1.8B since 1990 to address nonpoint source pollution.

Nonpoint source pollution is a serious problem, and unfortunately EPA can't solve the problem alone. Achieving the next level of environmental protection will be accomplished through the use of watershed-based approach. Our focus on watersheds will help transform the way Americans think about how they can make a difference for cleaner water. As people learn more about the ways, even small ways, individual actions can add up to big environmental consequences, they will become active partners in our effort to leave America's waters cleaner for generations to come.

More and more groups, including state governments, Tribes, and non-profits, are

We are pleased to announce that the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed was selected as one of Administrator Whitman's first watershed initiative projects. The Administrator has authorized \$650,000 to go towards implementing activities to develop an innovative environmental assets trading program, implement and assess impact on land use, collect stream morphology data, establish a continuous monitoring station, and develop a protection program for mussels. The Bayou Bartholomew Watershed Alliance and Winrock International both understand how effective watershed planning can lead to stronger partnerships and improved water quality.

Our Region 7 office in Kansas City, Kansas will be working with us and the Upper White River Basin Foundation to continue their efforts in addressing the problem of decreasing water quality along the Upper White. The Basin is home to over a million people in 19 counties in Northwest Arkansas and Southwest Missouri, covering an area of more than 14,000 square miles. It is among the most rapidly growing areas in Missouri and Arkansas. A watershed initiative grant for \$300,000 will help address nutrient concerns and water quality in this important area.

EPA is very excited to commit significant Federal dollars to support these top watershed efforts, all of which will serve as national models for other communities to follow. The organizations selected stand ready to realize on-the-ground water quality improvements. Two to three years from now, I am confident that we will see cleaner water and measurable environmental change.

All around our country, communities and individuals are already taking the initiative to restore watersheds and protect rivers and lakes. In fact, many creative and innovative methods for dealing with our water quality issues are being put into action at the local level. That is why EPA created the Clean Water Partners program to recognize the remarkable work that is being done to enhance the health of our nation's waters.

We received nearly 200 applications from around the country for our Clean Water Partners program. Of those, only 79 earned the designation and were recognized by the EPA Administrator Christie Whitman in Washington DC. In Arkansas, the City of Rogers Pollution Control Facility was selected for their outstanding commitment to improving water quality. We applaud them. Our Clean Water Partners are setting an important example for other communities to follow. Focusing on the importance of watershed-based planning and working in partnership with communities and local governments are the new tools we must use to ensure purer water in the years ahead.

Finally, let me touch on how we are working to better protect the land. The most significant accomplishment in this area is the passage of historic brownfields legislation. As many of you know, a brownfield is a parcel of land that is polluted and unused, a blight on the landscape and a drain on the vitality of the community in which it is located. Last year, we saw the results of nearly a decade worth of effort when President Bush signed into law brownfields legislation that will help communities all across America transform neighborhood eyesores into community assets.

Restoring a brownfield brings enormous benefits to a local community. Experience has shown that every dollar of federal money spent on a brownfield leverages about two-and-a-half dollars in private investment. In addition, restoring a brownfield helps preserve open space. Every acre of brownfields that is restored saves more than 4.5 acres of greenspace. Brownfields restoration is a win-win for everyone, from the children who have new places to play when a brownfield is turned into a ballfield, to the parents who have new jobs, when a brownfield becomes the site of a new office building or retail store.

Since 1995, EPA has awarded more than \$2.5 million to support the Arkansas Brownfields programs. In Camden, an area along the river front has been revitalized to build a regional intermodal transportation center with an expanded Port of Camden and a downtown business district. In Little Rock, work is underway to revitalize downtown by restoring a 28 acre site as the home of a multi-purpose business and education center for Heifer International, a new non-profit organizational headquarters.

We are also working to protect the land through continued support of Superfund clean up efforts around the country. The Bush Administration fully embraces the principle that the polluter pays, especially when it comes to cleaning up Superfund sites. The Superfund law puts the burden of paying for the cleanup of polluted sites where it belongs on those responsible for creating the mess.

Through aggressive action by the EPA, more than 70 percent of all Superfund cleanups have been paid by the responsible parties. Only in those cases where such parties cannot be determined or have long-since gone out of business are appropriated monies used. For those instances, the President has proposed to increase spending for Superfund clean ups by \$150 million in his budget. This will fund 10 to 15 additional Superfund construction projects in the coming year. In Arkansas, we currently have 12 federal Superfund sites, and have completed work at 3 of them. So, progress is being

In Arkansas, our PTRACK partners are Lockheed Martin, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, Dassault Falcon Jet, and International Paper. Each of these Arkansas-based members have joined our elite group of partners, and have demonstrated their commitment to bring about environmental improvements to their communities. I am pleased to recognize them here today.

From Clear Skies to watersheds to brownfields, the environmental policies we are pursuing reflect a deep understanding that our environmental quality is closely linked to our quality of life. Why should we care about environmental protection? Because the environment is an integral part to all of our lives. Whether it's clean lakes to enjoy on hot summer days, community renewal to enrich our neighborhoods, or better air for our children to breathe, all of us benefit from a healthy environment and all of us have a responsibility to ensure that we have one.

The 21st century holds an environmental landscape that has changed dramatically since the EPA was established. Meeting the new challenges that the future holds will not only take commitment to building partnerships, but also the motivation to try new ideas. As leaders, we know first hand that it can be difficult to move against the status quo. Through the years we have done so successfully, and in the area of environmental policy it's absolutely necessary that we do the same thing. Our environment isn't static and our policy should not be either.

As we think about the future of environmental protection, whether it's reducing harmful air emissions, cleaning up Superfund sites, or addressing global climate change, we need to seek out the big ideas, ideas that challenge conventional wisdom, inspire our imaginations, and leave a lasting mark of improvement on our environment and our quality of life. By working together, pursuing new ideas, and not getting trapped in the status quo, we can work to ensure a future of environmental health, a future of cleaner air, purer water, and better protected land, for this and many generations to come. Thank you.